

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
09/875,730	6th June 2001	Pratik Kumar NAHATA	2000P07678US01
DATE OF RESPONSE		ART UNIT	EXAMINER
8th June 2004		2157	Yves DALENCOURT

1. – 7. CANCELLED

8. (Currently Amended) A vehicle port control system comprising:

a capacitive sensor for generating an electric field for sensing an object at a predetermined distance about a vehicle port;

a lock for securing the port;

a latch for controlling opening and closing of said port; and

a control unit in communication with said capacitive sensor, said control unit for controlling the actuation of said lock;

[[The vehicle port control system of Claim 7]] wherein said latch includes a sensor in communication with said control unit, said sensor for detecting movement of said latch.

9. (Original) The vehicle port control system of Claim 8 wherein said sensor is an infrared sensor.

10. – 18. CANCELLED

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19. (Currently Amended) A vehicle port control system comprising:
a vehicle port;
a capacitive sensor for generating an electric field for sensing an object at
a predetermined distance about said port;
a latch controlling opening and closing of said port; and
a control unit in communication with said capacitive sensor, said control unit for
comparing a signal from said capacitive sensor with a predetermined threshold;
~~[(The vehicle port control system of Claim 18)]~~ wherein said latch includes a sensor in
communication with said control unit, said sensor for detecting movement of said latch.

20. (Previously Presented) A method of port control comprising the steps of:
establishing a voltage on a first surface;
establishing about the same voltage on a second surface spaced from the first surface;
establishing a lower voltage on a third surface spaced from the second surface, thereby
propagating an electric field from the first surface, around the second surface, and to the third
surface;
sensing changes in the electric field caused by the presence of an object in the electric
field;
generating an electric signal based on the changes in the electric field;
comparing the electric signal to a predetermined threshold; and
controlling a port based on the comparison.

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21. (Currently Amended) A vehicle port control system comprising:

a capacitive sensor for generating an electric field for sensing an object a predetermined distance about a vehicle port;

a lock for securing the port; and

a control unit in communication with said capacitive sensor, said control unit for controlling the actuation of said lock;

[[The vehicle port control system of Claim 1]] wherein said capacitive sensor comprises a first surface, a second surface and a third surface, said first surface having a first voltage about the same as a second voltage on said second surface, said third surface having a third voltage lower than said first surface.

22. (Currently Amended) The vehicle [[part]] port control system of Claim 21 wherein said second surface is spaced between said first surface and said third surface.

23. (Currently Amended) A vehicle port control system comprising:

a capacitive sensor for generating an electric field for sensing an object a predetermined distance about a vehicle port;

a lock for securing the port; and

a control unit in communication with said capacitive sensor, said control unit for controlling the actuation of said lock;

[[The vehicle port control system of Claim 1]] wherein said capacitive sensor is oriented to direct the electric field away from said lock.